

additional VIPER infrastructure. In almost every instance that a partnership already exists with a local government, efforts have been made to improve the present radio tower site environment, not only to support the VIPER Strategic project, but to also afford in kind improvements to local agencies as well.

Recommendations

The goal of VIPER is to provide interoperable communications for public safety agencies in North Carolina. Interoperable communications as intended for the VIPER Network is the ability for public safety agencies to communicate with each other using a single, common radio system. With the assessments of available resources complete, the VIPER team recommends that deployment of the 800 MHz SmartZone system and the associated digital microwave system continue, with a suitable funding package in place to produce statewide coverage within five years. This will involve significant upgrades to existing radio tower sites and infrastructure, the development and construction of new radio tower sites where identified and the addition of support staff members to the State Highway Patrol's present Technical Services Unit to provide support for construction, on going maintenance and management of the final VIPER Strategic solution product. Based upon the State Highway Patrol's findings, it is estimated that the total cost of system construction, including capital costs, will total \$190M. The re-occurring costs, including system maintenance, utilities and salaries and benefits for support personnel will approach \$12M when the project reaches maximum deployment.